

# The Application of Maximalism in Film Production

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## ABSTRACT

Maximalism is an artistic expression based on the Italian "Baroque" style, which constitutes an extremely prosperous artistic effect through the application and superposition of natural objects. Since the 20th century, maximalism doctrine has been widely used in artistic creation, such as painting, design, and photography. Film and television, as new art, have also gradually poured into maximalism elements. This paper studies Hayao Miyazaki's "Howl's Moving Castle", "The Borrowed Arrietty" and Ninagawa Mika's "No Longer Human: Dayzai Osamu and Three Women", By studying the above works, the author obtains the maximalism of pattern, color, and grain in film and television.

**Keywords:** *Maximalism, film, movies, application-film, television, film and television application, Hayao Miyazaki, Ninagawa Mika*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The research of maximalism usually focuses on fashion design, architectural design, decoration design, and so on, thus ignoring the maximalism of extreme complexity in film and television works. With the development of film, more and more directors begin to pursue things other than the plot, such as visual expression. Among them, maximalism began to be used, mainly focusing on Japanese films. This paper takes Hayao Miyazaki and Ninagawa Mika's film works Howl's Moving Castle, The Borrowed Arrietty, and No Longer Human: Dayzai Osamu and Three Women as examples to analyze the structure, picture, grain, and color of the film. This paper hopes to provide a new perspective for the analysis of the use of extreme complexity in the application of the film.

## 2. DEFINITION OF MAXIMALISM

"Baroque" was born in Italy in the 17th ~ 18th century and the "Rococo" style was born in France in the 1820s is representative of maximalism [1]. Maximalism became popular in the 19th century and was widely used in various fields of design at the end of the 20th century. In visual communication design, maximalism has formed a new style in illustration, font, poster, fashion image, and other design work with its unique design concept, design expression, and graphic communication [2]. There was no clear definition of maximalism at first. Until the 1980s, Witton proposed "maximalism" to describe a complex artistic phenomenon in the "new painting" movement [2].

Since then, when covering many different kinds of elements and factions (or needs) in a single work, people began to define this type of work as maximalism works. Maximalism expresses the author's strong personal feelings through bright colors and complex and repetitive elements. For example, by breaking the tradition, open and interactive design core, luxurious clothing language, and perceptual graphic expression to express the characteristics of maximalism [1].

## 3. THE APPLICATION OF MAXIMALISM IN HAYAO MIYAZAKI'S WORKS

Maximalism is usually expressed in the colors, elements, patterns, and materials of works. In Hayao Miyazaki's film, Hayao Miyazaki uses a large number of nonrealistic elements to draw the fantasy world. For example, in his representative work Howl's Moving Castle, Howl's bedroom description uses a large number of accumulated and repeated elements, with green and red as the main color and yellow as the auxiliary color, which gives the audience an maximalism picture. Red, green and yellow is bright colors in the definition of color, which is in line with the application of bright colors in maximalism. A large number of unrealistic elements in the scene, such as long flowers, giant crystal magic instruments, eye pendants, magic bottles, and so on, express the definition of breaking the tradition in maximalism. A large number of shell pendants and ornaments are also piled up in the room. Shell elements are widely used in maximalism. For example, a large

number of natural elements were used in the French Rococo style in the 20th century. Among them, shells are widely used because their beautiful curves and unique sense of making scroll patterns are highly respected by carved buildings in that era [3]. At the same time, a large number of jewelry elements in Howl's room also show the sense of luxury that maximalism wants to express and the hedonism that maximalism leads to. Abandon minimalism's consideration of practicality and rationality, and spare no effort to fill the gap. Boldly use colors, try various complex patterns, and construct psychedelic themes. The works reflect decadence, recklessness, and extravagance [6]. This was put forward by Gary Stephan, a psychoanalytic painting in the 1960s. The decadent and presumptuous positioning of extreme maximalism the scene of Howl's Moving Castle. In this scene, Sophie cleaned Howl's bathroom, resulting in Howl's hair from blonde to black. Howl, who has high requirements for his

appearance, is unwilling to see people because he can't accept the change in his appearance. This is also the first time Howl showed his real him. Before that, he was the dream lover in everyone's eyes. He should have no shortcomings, but the real him is a person who will be decadent because of the change of his appearance, constantly squandering his money to collecting all kinds of magic props, Gemstones, etc. the house has been in a mess, which is the real him. At the same time, because of this, Howl's room is full of a strong atmosphere of maximalism. Because maximalism is "unreasonable", everything is based on sensibility. The core concept of maximalism graphic design is to refuse the explanation of the meaning and pay attention to the perceptual form of Art [6]. Just like Howl's characterization, it is full of romance and sensibility from the air walk with Sophie at the beginning to Howl's garden gift to Sophie at the end.



Figure 1. Howl's room

At the same time, Howl's Moving Castle presents the audience with a unique surreal image—a walking deformed mobile castle at the beginning. The appearance of the castle looks dilapidated. The rooms are randomly combined on the base supported by four iron feet. The chimney constantly sprays steam and makes a harsh roar, as if it is deliberately attracting the attention of others or trying to cause the panic of onlookers [7]. These are

unrealistic elements. The fantasy theme is also an important content of extremely complex style. Maximalism doctrine most seeks the innovation of non reality and imagination. It uses gorgeous and complex color matching and images to accumulate and design a fantasy dream, to create a romantic beauty. Maximalism is like an unrealistic dream, beautiful and dangerous.



Figure 2. Howl's Castle

Hayao Miyazaki's other work, *The Borrowed Arrietty*, also uses maximalism to depict the scene, such as the room of the protagonist Arrietty in his work. Arrietty's room is depicted in green, red, and purple, and its color matching is in line with the bold and bright color matching in maximalism. At the same time, the furniture in the room picture is mostly smooth and flat without redundant edges and corners, which matches the Rococo

style, one of the representatives of maximalism. In form, because Rococo art advocates curves, edges and straight lines rarely appear in interior decoration. The corners of furniture or buildings are often decorated with curly grass patterns for a soft transition [4]. The room is also decorated with a large number of flowers and plants, echoing the use of natural elements during the prevalence of maximalism.



Figure.3 Arrietty's room

#### 4. THE APPLICATION OF MAXIMALISM IN NINAGAWA MIKA'S WORKS

In addition to Ninagawa Mika's works, a large number of film and television works in modern times have used maximalism elements, such as *No Longer Human*: Dayzai Osamu and *Three Women*, which was released by director Ninagawa Mika in 2019. In Ninagawa Mika's "*No Longer Human*: Dayzai Osamu and *Three Women*", Shizuko Ota's bedroom uses a large number of extremely complex ornaments. For example, the patterns of bedroom sheets use a large number of flower lines and bright colors, which is consistent with the use of natural elements in maximalism. Maximalism is closely related to the Baroque and Rococo styles.

Among Rococo elements, flowers are usually widely used, because the embroidery process of flowers is complex and the colors are bright, which can reflect the soft beauty of women and the gorgeous dress or room, which is the ultimate romantic atmosphere sought by France in the 18th century. At the same time, catkins, lace, and feathers are also widely used in the curtains of the room, creating a very "light" visual sense, which matches the Rococo elements of the 18th century. The remarkable characteristics of Rococo elements in clothing are delicate and soft, elegant and cumbersome, magnificent, and exaggerated shapes are widely used in clothing. With soft and gorgeous colors and natural forms of decoration, the overall style of clothing tends to be soft and complex, giving people a luxurious and romantic visual feeling [5].

This is consistent with the characterization of Shizuko Ota in *No Longer Human: Dazai Osamu and Three Women*. In his works, Shizuko Ota acts as the second mistress of Dazai Osamu. She is a beautiful woman who has suffered from the loss of her son. She falls in love with Dazai Osamu through Dazai Osamu's articles and wants to conceive Dazai Osamu's child to make up for her regret of losing her son. She believed in love and romance and was desperate. When she knew that Dazai Osamu already had a wife and children, she still resolutely believed in the love she wanted most and gave birth to a daughter for

Dazai Osamu. She is an unrealistic romanticist. She can abandon all her principles for love and romance, worship and enjoy the pleasure of the moment, pay no attention to the consequences and seek hedonism. This is consistent with the definition of maximalism. At the same time, in the later stage, Dazai Osamu gave the alimony to Shizuko Ota, which will soon be spent by Shizuko Ota. It can be seen that Shizuko Ota has always lived in an aristocratic family. And the luxurious life and thought full of the maximalism of the upper society.



**Figure 4.** Shizuko Ota's bedroom

## 5. CONCLUSION

The overall feeling of maximalism is romantic and gorgeous. Everything is like a dream accumulated, which can bring a strong visual impact. This is why film and television work gradually begin to try and use this kind of film and television expression. When people no longer worry about eating and drinking, they begin a deeper spiritual pursuit, such as perception. Similarly, with the continuous development and progress of films, filmmakers not only focus on stories and shooting techniques, but also begin to pursue visual expression. Prop group has gradually become an indispensable part of the film production system. People began to have a deeper understanding of the fit between the theme and props presented in the film.

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